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UNCLAS QUITO 001841

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, WHA, WHA/AND, WHA/PDA  
DIRONDPC FOR PA  
EMBASSIES FOR PAO/IO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL OPRC KIRC KPAO EC

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: ECUADOR RELATIONS WITH  
VENEZUELA

"Take Advantage, Ecuador," a column (08/09) by  
Gonzalo Ortiz Crespo in Quito's leading centrist "El  
Comercio" (circ. 70,000)

Quote: "A statement that no one can argue about is  
that Ecuador must take advantage of all economic  
options available that can be used to benefit its  
population. Today it seems that Venezuelan  
President, Hugo Chavez, is offering various options  
to Ecuador, which, using absolutely pragmatic  
criteria, the government of Alfredo Palacio must take  
advantage of. . . .

"Chavez is not doing this out of altruism, we know  
that. He is doing it to increase his geopolitical  
weight in the region, displaying the populism he uses  
in his country at an international level. . . .

"The Venezuelan opposition, weak and fragmented, says  
that everything is wrong since Chavez ascended to  
power. It is not true: a lot was already wrong  
before Chavez, especially the fierce concentration of  
wealth. And neither is it true that Chavez has not  
done anything good. . . . The problem is that poverty  
still exists in Venezuela . . . despite the hundreds  
of millions of dollars that the government receives  
each day from the sale of its oil. . . . This is  
because Chavez's populism has not changed, nor does it  
pretend to change, structures... .

MEMMOTT